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ABSTRACT

Intended for use by teachers, librarians, and parents, this guide analyzes Newbery Award Medal and honor winning books (1977 through 1984) for sexism. Following a statement of criteria, established by the American Library Association concerning the type of book that should receive the medal and honor citations, and the guidelines used to determine sexism in the books, the guide analyzes the following 27 books: (1) "Roll of Thunder, Hear Me Cry," by M. Taylor; (2) "Abel's Island," by W. Stieg; (3) "A String in the Harp," by N. Bond; (4) "Bridge to Terabithia," by K. Paterson; (5) "Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey," by J. Highwater; (6) "Ramona and Her Father," by B. Cleary; (7) "The Westing Game," by E. Raskin; (8) "The Great Gilly Hopkins," by K. Paterson; (9) "A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal, 1830-32," by J. Blos; (10) "The Road from Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl," by D. Kherdian; (11) "Jacob I Have Loved," by K. Paterson; (12) "The Fledgling," by J. Langton; (13) "A Ring of Endless Light," by M. L'Engle; (14) "A Visit to William Blake's Inn," by N. Willard; (15) "Ramona Quimby, Age 8," by B. Cleary; (16) "Upon the Head of a Goat," by A. Siegal; (17) "Dicey's Song," by C. Voight; (18) "Dr. Desoto," by W. Steig; (19) "Graven Images," by P. Fleischman; (20) "Homesick: My Own Story," by J. Fritz; (21) "Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush," by V. Hamilton; (22) "The Blue Sword," by R. McKinley; (23) "Dear Mr. Henshaw," by B. Cleary; (24) "Sugaring Time," by K. Lasky; (25) "A Solitary Blue," by C. Voight; (26) "The Sign of the Beaver," by E. G. Speare; and (27) "The Wish Giver," by B. Brittain. (FL)

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A Guide to Newbery Medal Winners And Honor Books, 1977-1984

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Introduction

This guide was developed as a result of a study done to complete a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. The study concerned itself with the presence of sexist images in the Newbery Medal Winners and Honor Books during the years 1977 through 1984.

The purpose of this guide to the Newbery Medal Winners and Honor Books is to provide a detailed analysis of these books where sexism is concerned. This guide is helpful to anyone who is interested in choosing the best literature for children. Teachers, librarians and parents need help in choosing appropriate literature for the children they guide. Developing positive self-images in children is one of the most important tasks adults involved with children have. Literature that presents positive self-image characters is an excellent way for adults to guide children through the many stages of maturation. It is important that boys and girls see their lifesyties incorporated in the literature they read. It is also important that the goals and choices the characters in these books have are widely diversified. Respect between characters is important. Authors of the best literature available will incorporate all of these facets into the storyline.

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Criteria for Awarding the Newbery Medal

The following are the criteria established by the American Library Association concerning the type of book awarded the Newbery Medal and Honor citation. These criteria were adopted by the American Library Association Committee Board January 1978.

Newbery Award

Terms

1. The Medal shall be awarded annually to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children published in the United States during the preceding year. There are no limitations as to the character of the book considered except that it be original work.

2. The Award is restricted to authors who are citizens or residents of the United States.

3. The committee in its deliberations is to consider only the books eligible for the Award as specified in the terms.

Definitions

1. "Contribution to American literature" indicates the text of a book. It also implies that the committee shall consider all forms of writing- fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Reprints and compilations are not eligible.

2. A "Contribution to American literature for children " shall be a book for which children are a potential audience. The book displays respect for children's understandings, abilities, and appreciations. Children are defined as persons of ages up to and including fourteen, and books for this entire age range are to be considered.

3. "Distinguished" is defined as:

*marked by eminence and distinction: noted for significant achievement
*marked by excellence in quality
*marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence
*individually distinct

4. "Author" may include co-authors. The author may be awarded the medal posthumously.

5. In defining the term, "original work," the committee will consider books that are traditional in origin, if the book is the result of original research and the retelling and interpretation are the writer's own.

6. "American literature published in the United States" means that books originally published in other countries are not eligible.

7. "Published . . . during the preceding year" means that the book has a publication date in that year, was available for purchase in that year, and has a copyright date no later than that year. A book might have a copyright date prior to the year under consideration, but for various reasons was not published until the year under consideration.

8. "Resident" specifies that the author has established and maintained residence in the United States as distinct from being casual or occasional visitor.

9. The term "only the books eligible for the Award," specifies that the committee is not to consider the entire body of the work of an author or whether the author has previously won the award. The committee's decision is to be made following deliberations about the books of the specified calendar year.

Criteria

1. In identifying distinguished writing in a book for children:

a. Committee members need to consider:

- Interpretation of the theme or concept
- Presentation of information including accuracy, clarity and organization
- Development of plot
- Delineation of characters
- Delineation of setting
- Appropriateness of style

Note: Because the literary qualities to be considered will vary depending on content, the committee need not expect to find excellence in each of the named elements. The book should, however, have distinguished qualities in all of the elements pertinent to it.

b. Committee members must consider excellence of presentation for a child audience.

2. Each book is to be considered as a contribution to literature. The committee is to make its decision primarily on the text. Other aspects of a book are to be considered only if they distract from the text. Such other aspects might include illustrations, overall design of the book, etc.

Note: The committee should keep in mind that the award is for literary quality and quality of presentation for children. The award is not for didactic intent or for popularity.

Guidelines

The following are the guides used to review the Newbery Medal winners and Honor books for sexism.

"Guidelines For Publications" by the National Committee of Teachers of English Committee on the Role and Image of Women in the Council and the Profession.

A publication which deals fairly with women:
1) publishes articles by women. Does it keep a reasonable balance between articles written by men and by women?
2) welcomes articles which deal openly with the problems of women in the profession. Does it reject articles about women on the plea that they are "not of general interest to our readers"?
3) reviews publications dealing with women's issues. Does it seriously consider books on sex stereotyping in children's literature, for instance, or on ways of correcting negative images of women, on creating positive images?
4) watches its language. Does it talk about "people" rather than "men" or "mankind"- unless it really does mean males only? Does it prefer such statements as "students can resell their texts" to "a student can resell his text"?
5)avoids cliche thinking about sex roles. Are elementary teachers always "she", college deans always "he"? Does it refer to "lady lawyers", "male nurses", "career women"?
6) treats the concerns of women as seriously as any other professional matter. When a situation involving women is funny, can it laugh at the situation without turning the laughter into an attack?
7) avoids showing personality traits as exclusively male or exclusively female. Do men always lead and women always follow? Are men regarded as "logical", women as "intuitive"?
8) encourages responses and suggestions for its readers. Does it provide space for comment and rebuttal on all its content, including women's issues?
9) refuses advertisements which present an unfavorable view of women. Does it examine the advertisements it carries with as much care as it does the articles it publishes?

"10 Quick Ways To Analyze Children's Books For Racism and Sexism" by the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

1. Check the Illustrations
   Look for Stereotypes. A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race or sex, which usually carries derogatory implications.
   Look for Tokenism. If there are racial minority

characters in the illustrations, do they look just like whites except for being tinted or colored in?

Who's Doing What. Do the illustrations depict minorities in subservient and passive roles or in leadership and action roles? Are males the active "doers" and females the inactive observers?

2. Check the Storyline.

Standard for Success. Does it take "white" behavior standards for a minority person to "get ahead"? Is "making it" in the dominant white society projected as the only ideal?

Resolution of Problems. How are problems presented, conceived and resolved in the story? Are minority people considered to be "the problem"? Does the story line encourage passive acceptance or active resistance? Is a particular problem that is faced by a racial minority person or a female resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person or a male?

Role of Women. Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their good looks or to their relationship with boys? Are sex roles incidental or critical to characterization and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

3.Look at the Lifestyles

Are minority persons and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with the unstated norm of white middle-class suburbia? If the minority group in question is depicted as "different", are negative value judgments implied? Are minorities depicted exclusively in ghettos, barrios or migrant camps? If the illustrations and text attempt to depict another culture, do they go beyond over-simplifications and offer genuine insights into another lifestyle?

4. Weigh the Relationships Between People.

Do the whites in the story possess the power, take the leadership, and make the important decisions? Do racial minorities and females of all races function in essencially supporting roles?

How are family relationships depicted? In Black families, is the mother always dominant? In Hispanic families, are there always lots of children? If the family is separated, are societal conditions-unemployment, povety, for example-cited among the reasons for separation?

5. Note the Heroes

When minority heroes do appear, are they admired for the same qualities that have made white heroes famous or because what they have done has benefited white people? Ask this question: "Whose interest is a particular hero really serving?"

6. Consider the Effects on a Child's Self-Image.

Are norms established which limit any child's aspirations and self-concept? What effect can it have on Black children to be continuously bombarded with images of the color white as the ultimate in beauty, cleanliness, virtue, etc., and the color black as evil, dirty, menacing, etc.? Does the book counteract or reinforce this positive association with the color white and negative associationnn with black?

What happems to a girl's self-image when she reads that boys perform all of the brave and important deeds? What about a girl's self-esteem if she is not "fair" of skin and slim of body?

7. Consider the Author's or Illustrator's Background

Analyze the biographical material on the jacket flap or the back of the book. If a story deals with a minority theme, what qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with the subject? If the author and illustrator are not members of the minority being written about, is there anything in their background that would specifically recommend them as the creators of this book?

8. Check out the Author's Perspective

With any book in question, read carefully to determine whether the direction of the author's perspective substantially weakens or strengthens the value of his/her work. Is the perspective patriarchal or feminist? Is it solely Eurocentric, or do minority cultural perspectives also receive respect?

9. Watch for Loaded Words

A word is loaded when it has insulting overtones. Examples of loaded adjectives (usually racist) are "savage", "primitive," "conniving," "lazy," "superstitious," "treacherous," "wily," "crafty," "inscrutable," "docile," and "backward."

Look for sexist language and adjectives that exclude or ridicule women. Look for use of the male pronoun to refer to both males and females. While the generic use of the word "man" was accepted in the past, its use today is outmoded. The following examples show how sexist language can be avoided: ancestors instead of forefathers; chairperson instead of chairman; community instead of brotherhood.

10. Look at the Copyright Date

Books on minority themes-usually hastily conceived-suddenly began appearing in the mid-1960's. There followed a growing number of "minority experience" books to meet the new market demand, but most of these were still written by white authors, edited by white editors and published by white publishers. They therefore reflected a white point of view. Not until the early 1970's has the children's book world begun to even remotely reflect the realities of a multiracial society. The new direction resulted from the emergence of minority authors writing about their own experiences. Unfortunately, this trend has been reversing, as publishers have cut back on such books. Non-sexist books, with rare exceptions, were not published before 1973.

From Pamela Biller's "Books for Liberating Young Readers". Research and Resources for Educators . Ed. Marcia Guttentag, Helen Bray, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1976.

1. A full particpation by females in physical and intellectual activities.

2. Female characters leading active, independent lives.

3. Girls dealing with a variety of choices and aspiring to diverse goals.

4. Male characters respecting female characters and relating to them as equals.

5. Male characters exhibiting a wide range of interests and emotions.

Guide for the Newbery Medal Winners
and Honor Books, 1977-1984

1977

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry -Mildred Taylor-Winner

This is the story of the Logan family, a black family living in rural Mississippi during the Depression. Ms. Taylor tells how this family copes with the racial problems that existed and how the children in this family grow to see that changes must be made. This is a family proud to be black, trying to live in society without sacrificing their human dignity. This is a book every child should be exposed to, whether black or white. It gives a fine portrayal of life of blacks in the 1930's. Children need to see what has, or perhaps hasn't changed in the years since.

This book is considered non-sexist. The characters, both male and female exhibit a respect for other people. The female characters are excellent role models. They have a wide variety of goals and their life choices are chosen because of these goals, not because of any limitation put on them by their gender. This book is highly recommended for children aged 8 and older.

Abel's Island -William Steig-Honor Book

Abel is a mouse who falls from a cliff to rescue his wife's scarf, falls into a river, lands on an island and survives by his wits untill he is able to return to the mainland and to his wife. This is a fantasy, where all the main characters are male. It is a story that is very easy to read, but before including it in a set of recommended books, make sure there is a counterbalance of books about females with strong positive images. It is an imaginative story that would keep young readers interested. But it does present a strong sexist view of the strong male/passive female image. This book is recommended for children aged 8 and older.

A String in the Harp -Nancy Bond-Honor Book

Nancy Bond's novel is a fascinating story of the past mixed with the present. By the magic of a harp key, Peter, who has moved to Wales with his family, is transported to ancient Wales. He experiences many things that are related in Welsh folk tales and myths. It is also the story of a family in the midst of radical change. The mother has died and the oldest girl, Jenny, takes over the mother's role. The story involves the reader from the start, creating ancient Wales and the history of the country as seen through the eyes of Americans. Another culture is presented in such a way that one wants to know more about Wales and its customs. But the "old" idea of the oldest daughter taking

over for the mother is the main drawback in recommending this book. The father and son are in the midst of disagreement over everything and Jenny thinks she should be able to solve their problems. The book presents the female image as chief caretaker. The book also presents this as being the females first choice in life. If using this book, it is recommended that other books that feature female characters having a wide variety of goals and choices also be used. This book is recommended for children aged 10 and older because of its length.

1978

Bridge to Terabithia -Katherine Paterson-Medal Winner

The friendship between two very unlikely people, Hank and Leslie, is detailed in Katherine Paterson's book. Hank has always lived in the rural section of Maryland and Leslie moves in from the city. Hank is from a large family with little money and Leslie is the only child of wealthy parents. Their friendship is based on mutual respect and caring for each other. It doesn't matter to Hank that Leslie is a girl, or that she can out run all the fifth grade boys. She shows Hank a part of himself he would never have known. In their magical kingdom of "Terabithia" they explore the woods, what they want to be, what kind of people they are becoming and how to deal with the world. When tragedy strikes and takes Leslie away, Hank learns even more about himself and what

kind of person he intends to be. This is a beautiful book that should be on recommended lists every where. With more books like this boys and girls could realize they can be friends, without any social stigma being attached to it.

This book is non-sexist. The author has created characters that see no limits for themselves. The fact that they are female and male have no baring on what choices they make. This is a very simple book to read and it holds the interest of the reader. However, ideas in it may be more understandable to an older reader. This book is highly recommended for children aged 8 and older.

Anpao: An American Indian Odessey -Jamake Highwater-Honor Book

Jamake Highwater has weaved a tale based on many Indian legends and myths that are steeped with religious meaning to the American Indian. Anpao make a long and difficult journey to and from the Sun for his beloved Indian maiden. Many of the characters and actions are difficult to comprehend from a western point of view. Without some clear understanding of Indian culture, this would be a difficult book for anyone to read. If this book is used, it is recommended for children aged 12 and older.

Ramona and Her Father -Beverly Cleary-Honor Book

This is the story of Ramona and her family as they experience their Father losing his job. How the family copes with this, with humor and not a few arguments, is the basis for this book. Children will see themselves and their family in this book. The Ramona books portray normal, everyday family situations that children face everyday. These situations are solved as any family would solve them. The female portrayals in this book are life-like. Ramona's mother is like most mothers children are likely to meet. The father is caring and honest about situations with his children. The parents show their children that there are a great variety of choices and goals in life. The book is considered non-sexist. It is very easy reading and highly recommended for children aged 8 and older.

1979

The Westing Game -Ellen Raskin-Medal Winner

This book, on the surface, is a fun "who did it" type of book, complete with a haunted house, strange occurances, and a managerie of characters. Underlying the simplicity is a web of complex personalities and emotions. It is considered a non-sexist book, presenting both positive and negative female images, with the positive out weighing the negative. It is a very easy book to read. And it is a "fun" book to have children read. This is an important aspect. If

children are exposed to books that are good literature and fun to read, they are more apt to choose good literature. This book is highly recommended for children aged 10 and older.

The Great Gilly Hopkins -Katherine Paterson-Honor Book

Gilly is a foster child, headed for her fifth foster home. She is eleven and has been in foster care since her mother left her eight years before. Gilly is a tough character, deceiving herself into believing if only her mother knew her, she would come to get her. When this dream becomes reality, Gilly realizes what everyone else has known, her mother doesn't want her. It is only through the love she has experienced in her last foster home with Maime Trotter that Gilly finds the strength and courage to face what life has handed her. She determines to make a life with her grandmother, who does want her. This is a good book for all children, especially since foster children are in such great number today. Many children may have a friend who is in foster care. This would give children a view as to what it's like to be a foster child. This book is non-sexist it its view of women. The characters have a wide variety of lifestyles. Unique individuals are presented in a positive light. Gilly need not be like everyone else for people to love her. This book is highly recommended for children aged 8 and older.

1980

A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal, 1830-32 -Joan Blos-Medal Winner

This is the fictional journal of a girl growing up in New England in the early 1800's. The places are real, but the people are fictional. The girl writing the journal is 10 years old when the journal starts and 12 at its finish. She writes of life and what it was like. She also vents her hopes, dreams, fears and ambitions in this journal. Her father remarries and she writes of what it feels like to suddenly have a new mother and brother. Her best friend dies and she writes of the lonliness and fear this experience evokes. From the historical point, this would be a book for a recommended list. It also presents honest feelings of what those years in a girl's life are like. It gives insight that much of what make us human has not changed over so many years. This is a non-sexist book which shows that people have always had choices. It's the variety of choices that has expanded over the last century. This short, easily read book is highly recommended for children aged 9 and older.

The Road From Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl
-David Kherdian-Honor Book

The author writes of his mother's escape from Eastern Turkey to the western section of the country during World War I. This is a time when the Turks attempt to solve the "Armenian Problem" much as the Germans attempted to solve the "Jewish Problem" during the second World War. Veron's story is one of hope and fortitude. Using her wits with her faith she, along with an aunt and cousin, escaped the mass murder of the Armenians. The author portrays his mother with a clarity that could only have come from having listened to this story many times. The only concern these people have is survival. Life choices are made based on the instinct to survive, not on any artificial bounds created by one's gender. This is another non-sexist book that should be placed on any recommended list. It tells of a piece of history that few are aware of. The author makes us care for all of the people in the story. When the story starts Veron is a young girl, around nine. At the end of the story she is in her early twenties. Many young readers will be interested in the story because it is about someone their age. This is an easily read book recommended for children aged 8 and older.

1981

Jacob I Have Loved -Katherine Paterson-Medal Winner

Katherine Paterson has written an intense, emotional story of twin girls. Louise and Caroline are as different as any two sisters can be, much less twins. They are separate personalities, but they have trouble separating themselves. Louise especially has this problem. She sees only what she isn't in comparison to her sister. This is a story of growing up and away from those Louise loves. Growing away is a difficult and painful process that is often necessary to be able to see what one person is. This is especially true for fraternal twins, whose personalities and expectations often get confused and entwined in the other's. This often happens not only to the girls in the story but to those around them. This is an excellent story of how a person perceives what is happening around them, colors all that they do and often how they think. In the story it is often how Louise perceives things around her that determines how she thinks. It takes Louise many years to be able to separate herself mentally from Caroline. Only then is she able to view her life, and what she did with it, with any clarity. Many children as they reach adolescence find themselves going through this very process. Those who meet Louise and Caroline will find soul mates in these two characters. This non-sexist book recreates the struggle many adolescents deal with while

trying to define their own identity. Many options are available to them, but there is great difficulty in choosing. The characters mature, grow older and come to the realization that there is a place for each unique individual. This book is highly recommended for children aged 10 and older.

The Fledgling -Jane Langton-Honor Book

This is a fantasy story of a young girl, Georgie, who wants nothing more than to learn to fly. It is the story of how a Canadian goose, passing through Concord, Massachussetts on his migration south in autumn, discovers Georgie and teaches her to fly at night over Waldon Pond. Jane Langton's story has an almost transcendental feeling about it. The characters never seem quite real. On the surface it is a very simple book to read, short and holds the reader's interest. This book is considered non-sexist. The character of Georgie is very unique. She is young, but she is very comfortable in pursuing activities that are of interest to her. These activities may seem odd to those around her, but she is not concerned with what others think. Georgie becomes concerned only when someone attempts to change her. Her family allows Georgie the room to expand her unique personality. Georgie learns to fly and to become an independent person. The Fledgling is an interesting story, but it may be difficult for young readers to understand some of the ideas. This book is recommended for children aged 12

and older.

A Ring of Endless Light -Madeleine L'Engle-Honor Book

This is a continuation of Madeleine L'Engle's books about the Austin family. The focus of this story is fifteen-year-old Vicky and the summer spent on Seven Bay island with her grandfather who is dying. She is also the object of the needs and romantic hopes of three young men. This is the story of how she deals with the reality of death and the almost oppressive needs of these three young men. It is through her relationship with Adam that it is discovered she has a strong telepathic ability to communicate with dolphins. This is a fascinating story of the dolphins and their ability to help the human species heal. It is also the story of how Vicky grows and learns to deal with demands on her time and emotions. But the one problem with the book is the underlying theme that the men in her life will help and rescue her from her problems. After a particularly trying experience Adams comes to help Vicky cope. At the end of the book Vicky is dealing with the emotional over-load she has experienced,with the "help" of Adam, and is in his arms. This book is sexist. It perpetuates the rescue of Sleeping Beauty by the Handsome Prince myth. Girls and woman need men to help them cope. This is a theme that continues the thought that women and girls are unable to cope alone. It is such a fascinating story that this underlying theme may at

first escape notice. However, the feeling is strong and comes through clearly in the story. This is a long book. Other books would be more appropriate to use with children aged 12 and older.

1982

A Visit to William Blake's Inn -Nancy Willard-Medal Winner

Nancy Willard has written a book of poetry based on her love of William Blake. The poems tell the story of the travelers that find rest at an inn run by the poet, William Blake. Alice and Martin Provensen provide the illustrations. The poetry is a good way to introduce this literary form to young readers. It is easy and fun to read and comprehend. However, in both the text and illustrations the presentation is sexist. All but four of the main characters are male. Those characters that are female are the traditional ones, the moon and cow. In the illustrations the background characters that are female are given traditional role such as maids and angels. When using this book it would be good to have another volume of poetry that would give more prominence to positive images of female characters. It is recommended that this volume of poetry be used with children age 8 and older.

Ramona Quimby, Age 8 -Beverly Cleary-Honor Book

In this tale of the Quimby family, Ramona's father is quitting his job to go back to school and is working a part-time job. Her mother works in the Doctor's Office so schedules are sometimes hectic in the household. Ramona has to go to Herbie's house after school until someone comes to get her. This is her "job" in the family her father tells her. Again, as in the other Ramona books, a close, loving family is portrayed. It is a family like most families and children reading this book will see their life style portrayed. It may be Beverly Cleary's talent for writing this type of book that makes her so popular with young readers. This is not great literature, but it is the way the books strike a harmonious note with readers that makes them valuable. This is a non-sexist book, where each member of the family is respected and valued for the contribution each makes to the family. The parents are excellent role models for their daughters. The characters see themselves as having diverse career goals, and are able to make those goals become reality. The father is not bound by society's boundaries of making him the sole support of the family. The mother's strength is in her ability to deal with the problems of being a working mother in positive ways. The children see themselves as a main part of the family's goals and are able to help the family achieve the goal. This book is highly recommended to be used with children aged 8 and older.

Upon the Head of a Goat -Aranka Siegal-Honor Book

Aranka Siegal has written an autobiographical story of her childhood in Hungary during World War II. Being Jewish, her family suffered great hardships. Lack of food, being forbidden to go to school, family members being taken out of the home are just some of the things Ms. Siegal relates in her story. It is her mother who manages to often create things from next to nothing to keep her family going. It is her mother's faith and optimism that strengthens Piri (Ms. Siegal), even as they are loaded on to a train headed for Aushwitz. Only Piri and her sister Iboya survive the war. This is a non-sexist story of courage, much like Road from Home . This is a part of history best told by those who experienced it. All of the people are courageous, though the fear and uncertainty of life come through clearly. These are people whose one concern is survival. Both men and women worked together equally in the hope that some would survive to tell the story. Perhaps the more children are made aware of the things that occurred then, the less chance there is of it happening again. This book most definately belongs on the recommended list for children aged 10 and older.

1983

Dicey's Song -Cynthia Voigt-Medal Winner

Cynthia Voigt writes of a family in turmoil. Dicey, the oldest Tillerman, has finished the journey that her mother started with them- to return to Dicey's grandmother. However, her mother leaves them one day and never returns. All four Tillerman children, Dicey, Maybeth, James and Sammy come to live with a fiesty, slightly eccentric grandmother who didn't know they existed until they showed up on her porch. This is a non-sexist story of how the children and grandmother learn from each other how to make peace with the past and live for the future. A strong bond is formed between children and grandmother that gives each of them strength when Dicey's mother dies. It is also the story of a 13 year old girl discovering herself, for the first time, as separate from her sister and brothers. It is a story of unique individuals, who take pride in their uniqueness. People are what they are, and each is learning not to judge others, or themselves, too quickly. Ms. Voigt gave this novel a very appropriate name, for it reads like a song. This book is highly recommended for use with children aged 10 and older.

Dr. DeSoto -William Stieg-Honor Book

Dr. DeSoto is a mouse dentist who has a gentle touch and treats all types and sizes of animals-except for those animals who have a habit of eating mice for dinner! When a wolf appears one day begging Dr. DeSoto to end his suffering, Dr. DeSoto and his wife-helper devise a plan to aid the wolf without any danger to themselves. Again, William Stieg has written a sexist story of strong male figures and passive, helpmate female figures. It is a clever story which will delight the young reader. However, if it is used, it should be used in a program where there is a balance of books about strong, active women. If used, this book is recommended for children aged 5 and older.

Graven Images -Paul Fleischman-Honor Book

This entry is a compilation of three short stories. The first is about a woman who poisons the entire crew of a ship her son is on because he has taken an "evil" path of life. The second is about a cobbler's apprentice and how he uses a copper weathervane to dictate how he courts the young woman he admires. The third is about a sculptor in Genoa who is commissioned to sculpt a likeness by a ghost. Each story contains an aura of unearthliness, or of the supernatural. Both male and female characters are given sexist and very unsavory personalities. The women are shrews and the men are weak. Although, the short story literary form is losing

popularity, the fact that this compilation was awarded an Honor citation may have helped this literary form regain some of its lost popularity. However, the stories and characters are so odd it is difficult to recommend this book for any age. If used it should be with much older readers who have attained some discretionary abilities. The recommended ages for this is 18 and older.

Homesick: My Own Story -Jean Fritz-Honor Book

Ms. Fritz has written an accoount of her years growing up in China. Her missionary parents were living in China when she was born. Ms. Fritz returned to the United States when she was twelve. She relates a time of turmoil, when foreigners were mistrusted and civil unrest was rampent. She tells of her personal rebellion of being an American and being a student in a British school. She also relates her love of China and the beauty she discovered in this ancient land and in its people. This is a non-sexist story of an engaging, spirited girl, who loved life and met it head on. This too should be on every list of recommended books. Not only is the girl, Jean, a fascinating person to read about, the book gives insight into a culture that is completely foreign to most children. This book is highly recommended for use with children aged 10 and older.

Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush -Virginia Hamilton-Honor Book

This is the tale of Teresa, or Tree as she is called, and her retarded brother Dabney. Tree cares for Dabney while her mother is away working, often a month at a time. Tree doesn't understand her life, but accepts it. It is when she meets Brother Rush that she begins to question why she is in charge of her brother, and why her mother isn't able to stay with them. Brother Rush takes Tree and Dabney "out" to a time in the past, where they meet family members who have died, and learn family secrets that Tree's mother has chosen to forget. It is through Brother Rush that Tree comes to an understanding of her life and her mother. Tree is a black girl, but many of her misgivings and questions are common to adolescent girls of all races. However, there are many things in her life that come strictly from the black culture. The dialogue is often in Black English, but it is easy to comprehend and should not stop anyone from reading the book. It is a beautiful, non-sexist story of coming to an understanding of oneself and ones family ties.

The Blue Sword -Robin McKinley-Honor Book

This is a fantastic fantasy tale of Harry Crewe. Harry is a girl who has left her home in the town of Home to come to live in the last outpost of Homeland, Istan. Istan is a desert outpost, and Homelanders live in barrack like quarters. Istan was once a part of the great Darian Empire. Now what is left of this Empire consists of mountains no Homelander has ever climbed. It is here where the Free Hillfolk live. It is said the Hillfolk live by some magic that has prevented their take over by the Homelanders. Corlath is their King. The story takes place in a time of kings, war horses and magic swords. It is the story of Harry and Corlath, how together they save the remains of Damar and the Homelanders from the dreaded enemy, the less than human Northerners. This is a non-sexist tale of respect for things unknown, and respect for the unique abilities each character owns. Harry and Corlath see each other as people first, male and female second. All in the kingdom are given equal opportunities, according to abilities, whether they be woman or man. This is a fine example of a fantasy that has characters that are human, not sprites or "hobbit-like" characters. This is a long book and requires concentrated reading. This book is highly recommended for use with children aged 12 and older.

1984

Dear Mr. Henshaw - Beverly Cleary, winner.

Beverly Cleary has written a book quite unlike any of her others. The story is told by a series of letters written by Leigh Botts to his favorite author, Mr. Henshaw. Leigh begins his series of letters to Mr. Henshaw as an assignment from his English teacher. Leigh wants to become a writer and asks Mr. Henshaw how to begin. Mr. Henshaw suggests that he keep a journal. To help himself do this, Leigh begins each page with "Dear Pretend Mr. Henshaw". As the journal evolves, Leigh explores his feelings about his parents divorce, his mother working, his new school and new friends. He also painfully explores his feelings about his father's absence and, what seems to Leigh, his lack of interest in his son. By writing his journal, Leigh comes full circle and learns to accept his father's way of showing his love. Leigh also learns to accept and like himself. The most important lesson of all is his growing understanding of why his mother divorced his father, even though it is obvious she still cares for him very much.

This books is considered non-sexist. Even though the books main character is male, Leigh is given full emotions and is able to express these to his mother, father and in his letters to Mr. Henshaw. Leigh sees many possibilities for

himself as he grows to adulthood. He has learned this by watching his mother realize her choices in life. From his mother, Leigh learns that everyone has choices, that no one must remain as they are.

As with her other books, Ms. Cleary has written a book that is simple to read and understand. This book is reccomended for children aged 10 and older.

The Sign of the Beaver -Elizabeth George Speare-Honor Book

This is the story of survival in the frontier of the 1700's. Matt and his father built the cabin and started the crops. Then his father left Matt to guard the cabin and crops while he went back to get Matt's mother, sister and new baby. When a strange white man steals his gun, Matt is faced with finding food and defending himself in new ways. It is when he meets with the Indian boy, Attean, that Matt begins to understand the frontier and the ways of survival. It is through this unusual friendship that Matt learns the heritage and culture of the Beaver clan. He also realizes that there are problems with the ways the white man has taken over the Indian territory. He begins to think that there is another side to all the stories of Indians terrorizing the white settlers.

This is an excellent introduction to frontier life of the 1700's. Ms. Speare has created images truer to life than

most frontier stories give. Both Matt and Attean learn a great deal about themselves and their way of life through their friendship. The most important lesson for Matt is his realization that the white settlers may not always have been blameless in the confrontations with the Indians. Attean teaches Matt a new respect for the wilderness, not as just something to be tamed, but as something to be understood and not wasted.

Ms. Speare's book would be classified as non-sexist. Matt and Attean express their fears, hopes and ambitions. Matt understands he needs help to survive until his family returns. The most important aspect in this book is Matt's realization that the white man needs to understand the Indian culture that they are infringing upon.

This book is recommended for children aged 10 and older.

A Solitary Blue -Cynthia Voigt-Honor Book

Jeff Greene's mother left home when he was seven. She said she had work to do. There were poor people and hungry children that needed her help. Jeff and his father "the Professor" lived in the void that Melody, Jeff's mother, left. Jeff came to understand he must do everything right so his father would not leave too. It was not until Jeff was eleven and he visited Melody for a summer that he realized that his idea that she loved him was wrong. Melody had a knack for using people, convincing them that she really loved

them until they really need her. She was incapable of loving a real person, only those ideals she held. It is not until Jeff realizes this about his mother and withdraws from life that his father can reach out to him. It is through the pain that his mother has caused both Jeff and his father that they are finally able to become a family.

Ms. Voigt has created a convincing family portrait of a father and son. She delves into the problems men have in showing emotions and needs to each other. It is the character Brother Thomas who assists Jeff and his father in their communication of shared emotions. It is through this shared communication that Jeff learns his father is not a cold person. His father is trying to cope with the void created when Melody left. This is a non-sexist look at a father-son relationship and a different kind of single parent family. It also presents a female character whose parenting style differs dramatically from a traditional viewpoint or perspective.

This book is recommended for readers aged 12 and older.

Sugaring Time -Kathryn Lasky-Honor Book

This is an informational book about an American tradition of gathering maple sap. Ms. Lasky and photographer Christopher G. Knight followed the Lacey family during "sugaring time". The story and photographs show a family that is involved together in a project that requires

co-operatiion and hard work from everyone. Everyone has a part in collecting the sap, from the children hanging the buckets to the adults boiling the sap until it turns to syrup. The grandeur and icyness of a Vermont winter is related by the words and photographs. Ms. Lasky relates the story of a family that finds a renewal of their love for each other and their life each year at sugaring time.

This non-sexist book is recommended for children aged 8 and older.

The Wish Giver -Bill Brittain-Honor Book

It is during the annual Coven Tree Church Social that Thaddeus Blinn appears. He proclaims that he can give people "exactly" what they ask for, at the small price of 50 cents. Only four people are curious enough to listen. For 50 cents Thaddeus Blinn gives them each a card with a red spot on it. All one must do is place a thumb on the red dot and wish for "exactly" what they want.

This is the story of how three people get "exactly" what they wish for and how they deal with the situations.

Polly, a girl who says exactly what she thinks, wishes that people would pay attention to her. What she gets for her wish is that every time she says something mean to or about someone, she looses the power to speak and begins to croak like a bullfrog.

Rowena Jarvis is a sixteen year old who is in love with a traveling salesman. She wishes that Henry Piper would "put down roots" and never leave Coven Tree again. Consequently Henry Piper becomes rooted to the ground and gradually turns into a tree.

Adam Fiske lives on a farm with his parents. Their farm is the poorest in the county because they have little access to water when it doesn't rain. He wishes for water all over the farm. What he gets is water coming out of every crack and hole on the farm. The farm is flooded and the Fiske family must leave it.

Only Stew Meat, the local grocer, puts his card away as a memento of the church social. It is his card that eventually solves the others problems.

Bill Brittain has written a book that will catch and keep the interest of a reader. However, this book is classified sexist. The two female characters are flighty, argumentative and unable to figure out how to solve their problems. Their wishes revolve around themselves and their need for attention. The single male character Adam, wishes for help for his family, but his wish turns to disaster also. However, it is the male character who is concerned for something other than himself. Stew Meat, the adult male grocer, is turned to to solve everyone's problems.

This is a clever and entertaining book. However, if it is used, it is recommended that there be other books that

present female images that are concerned with issues which are less self focused. This book is recommended for children aged 8 and older.

Newbery Medal Winners and Honor Books

1977
Taylor, Mildred. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry . New York: Dial Press, 1976. Winner

Stieg, William. Abel's Island . New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1976.

Bond, Nancy. A String in the Harp . New York: Atheneum, 1976.

1978
Paterson, Katherine. Bridge to Terabithia . New York: Crowell, 1977. Winner

Highwater,Jamake. Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey . Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1977.

Cleary, Beverly. Ramona and Her Father . New York: Morrow, 1977.

1979
Raskin, Ellen. The Westing Game . New York: Dutton, 1978. Winner

Paterson, Katherine. The Great Gilly Hopkins . New York: Crowell, 1978.

1980
Blos, Joan. A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal, 1830-32 . New York: Scribner, 1979. Winner

Kherdian, David. The Road From Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl . New York: Greenwillow Books, 1979.

1981
Paterson, Katherine. Jacob I Have Loved . New York: Crowell, 1980. Winner

Langton, Jane. The Fledgling . New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

L'Engle, Madeleine. A Ring of Endless Light . New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1980.

1982
Willard, Nancy. A Visit to William Blake's Inn . New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981. Winner

Cleary, Beverly. Ramona Quimby, Age8 . New York: Morrow, 1981.

Siegal, Aranka. Upon The Head Of A Goat . New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1981.

1983

Voigt, Cynthia. Dicey's Song . New York: Atheneum, 1982. Winner

Steig, William. Dr. DeSoto . New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1982.

Fleischman, Paul. Graven Images . New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

Fritz, Jean. Homesick: My Own Story . New York: Putnam, 1982.

Hamiliton, Virginia. Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush . New York: Philomel Books, 1982.

McKinley, Robin. The Blue Sword . New York: Greenwillow Books, 1982.

1984

Cleary, Beverly. Dear Mr. Henshaw . New York: Morrow, 1983. Winner

Lasky, Katherine. Sugaring Time . New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1983.

Voigt, Cynthia. A Solitary Blue . New York: Atheneum, 1983.

Speare, Elizabeth George. The Sign of the Beaver . Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.

Brittain, Bill. The Wish Giver . New York: Harper & Row, 1983.